RENICH

Methods of Early

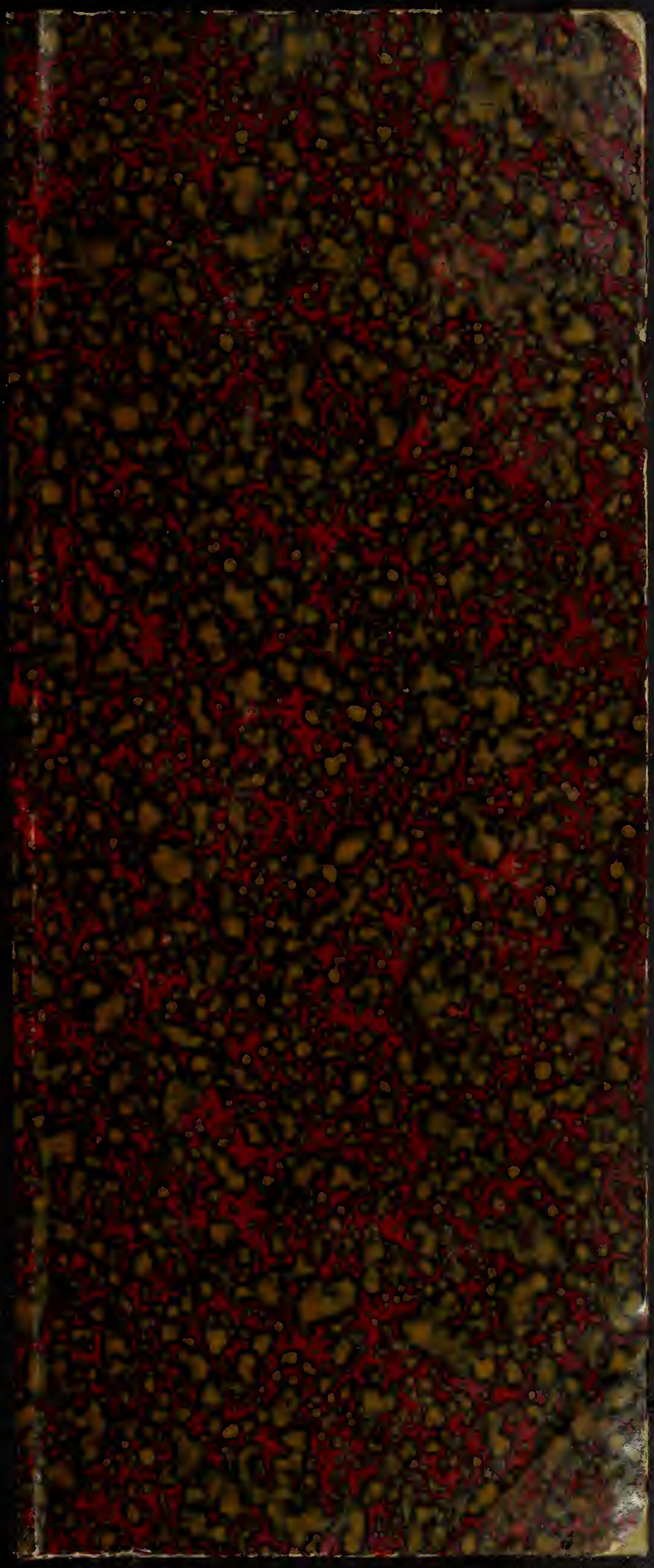
Christian Missonary Work

History

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METHODS OF EARLY CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY WORK

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BY

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THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN HISTORY

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Katherine Louise Reinick

ENTITLED Methods of Early Christian Missionary Work

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Bachelor of Arts in History

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OUTLINE.

Methods of Early Christian Missionary Work.

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INTRODUCTION.

The famous missions of southern California afford American travellers a dim reflection of the work of early Christian missionaries. Few realize how much the Christian Church is indebted to men like these monks, dressed in their dark cloaks and hoods, with heavy cords about their waists, and beads hanging from their belts.

For some reason the early history of Christian missions has been neglected. There are many biographies of individual workers, but hitherto, no adequate study has been made of their methods. No comparisons have been drawn between the work of the missionaries in England, and of those in Germany; no contrasts between the value of the approach of St. Augustine as compared to the approach of St. Patrick. No one has attempted to answer, why two thousand years have passed and such little change has occurred in the missionary practices of the Christian Church. This, I believe, is in part answered here.

Because of the immensity of the field, I have limited myself to the years 300 to 900, and have attempted to consider the work of only a few of those who have gone out in mission service, basing my study on work done from Ireland and Rome. I have not attempted to exhaust the subject of methods used by the early missionaries. My chief aim has been to open up a field for future detailed study.

After I had begun this investigation, my attention was called to the work of Mr. Wilhelm Konen of Düsseldorf, Germany, who is writing a book, entitled "Uber die Methoden der Germanenbekehrung", one chapter of which on "Die Heidenpredigt in der Germanenbekehrung," having come out in 1909. Mr. Konen has limited his field to Germany, and is considering the methods of the missionaries whose work resulted in the Christianization of that people.

In the work which I have taken up, the material to be found is unlimited when one considers the volumes of Migne, the Acta Sanctorum, the Rolls Series, the Ecclesiastical Histories, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and the hundreds of lesser sources. To really cover this topic, every missionary's life ought to be considered. Such a study has here been impossible, for to do this would require the ability to read readily German, French, and Latin, which the writer cannot do; and more than this, the aim of the paper does not require it.

Part I. Origin of Missions.

It is impossible to take up the study of Christian missions without going back to the days when missionary work was first considered. Up to the time of Christ the Jewish people had done nothing toward bringing their God before people of other nations. The Jewish God was strictly a God for the Jewish Nation. The story of Jonah who was commanded to go to Nineveh to preach in that city stands out as practically the only story of its kind, for it brought to the Hebrews a new message, a message of a God of the whole world, and not of only one people.

Christ, though filled with a love for all men, and with a mission for the conversion of all the world, spent his life among the Jews and tried to bring them to a realization of the divine in life. It was not until the death of Christ, that a definite change occurred. The apostles received their impetus for going to people of other countries direct from their Master. It was the little number of disciples that gathered on the mountain whom he told to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,"[1] and to be his witnesses "both in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."[2]

With these commands, backed by the promises "Lo I am with you alway,"[3] and "Greater works than these shall ye do,"[4] the disciples left their own homes and

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1. Matthew 28:19
2. Acts 1:8
3. Matthew 28:20
4. John 14:12

traveled to other people. It was only this handful of Jews who knew the Christ, so small a number that the nations of that day did not fear them, and the Roman philosophers treated lightly the tales that circulated about them. It is an interesting story to read how these men gathered their little congregations, not from heathen homes, but from civilized people, and argued the position of their Christ; and to read of Paul as he dared to stand before Athens itself and call the people of that city to worship the true God.

The result of the work of the apostles was the formation of little individual congregations of worshipers, some of whom remained true to their new faith, while others fell again into their old ways. For many, the gospel soon lost its broad and wide message of love, and became a gospel of fear. The death of Christ was such as demanded of them, no more the sacrificing of animals; but rather, the sacrificing of their own lives in penance for sin. The stylites and the hermits started a new form of Christian worship.

But even though in many instances Christianity became narrow, underneath remained the spirit which here and there stirred individuals to start forth on a mission to the world. Some pushed up from Italy and told the story to those who dwelt north of the Alps. Others carried Christianity to Ireland, from whence it was soon to be carried to other countries. During this period Arianism spread north from Antioch, then turned to the west, and made its way into the territory of the

Gauls.

Up to 300 Christianity had held no political place, individuals had felt its power, but no where had it been backed by the strongest secular leaders. Not until Constantine, who realized the opportunity it opened for him politically, did it gain the place it was to hold in the world's history. Gradually the Church in Rome became the center of Christianity in the west. Even though the Church grew strong politically, there were men of great influence who felt the deepest spiritual side of it, and became thrilled, not only with the call of Christ to go out and witness for him, but were stirred with the stories of the apostles who had given their lives in this cause.

Of all the influential men in the early Roman Church, the one who stands out as the best type of political and religious power, is Gregory the Great. When in the monastery of St. Andrew's he spent hours in the study of the scriptures. Here he conceived that desire to go to the heathen people, which was strengthened on seeing the slave boys from England for sale in the Roman market. There and then he decided to go to the British Isles and not only did he obtain permission from Pope Pelagius II, but he actually set out on the journey. It was then that the Romans realized the influence which he had in the city, and censured the pope for permitting him to go, and forced his recall to Rome.[1] But the impulse to do missionary work could not be put down, for, though he returned to Rome, he

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1. Catholic Encyclopedia, v. 6, p.781.

returned determined to use his influence to promote the cause of missions. When he became pope, this opportunity was afforded him.

It is impossible to understand the real significance of the work that a man like Gregory could do as pope in Rome unless a comparison is made with the work that was carried on elsewhere, where no backing was obtainable. At this time the Irish Church was doing important missionary work. It was in no way connected with the Roman Church, but had been started before Rome had become strong. Individuals had scattered throughout Ireland, had gone to Scotland and England, and were soon to cross the channel. Though the influence of the Irish Church was great, it was in no way strong enough to maintain its position against the power of Rome. Even St. Patrick who went to Ireland as a missionary felt the lack of power in his work there, and after about thirty years of independent labor, he asked to be consecrated a bishop of the Roman Church.[1]

St. Augustine, however, went out as a worker under Gregory, and with the authority of Rome behind him, was able to enter the country in an open and direct manner, and his message was welcomed by the people of England.

Boniface made his first advance into Gaul without a backing in Rome, but to no avail.[2] Returning

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1. Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia; v. 8, p. 384.
2. Hauck, Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands: v. 1, p.456.

unsuccessful from his work among the Frisians, he decided to go to Rome and receive from the pope the authority of the Roman Church.[1] Not only did Boniface make this one journey but he made two later ones, and was always in close touch with Rome. Through this backing his entire work was put on a decidedly strong basis. Thus we find that the power of Rome politically did much in the advancement of Christianity.

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1. Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p. 93.

Part II. The Beginning of the Work.

The districts into which these missionaries entered may be more readily understood when we contrast them with the territories in which the apostles worked. It is true that the apostles went out among a people who were worshipping idols, and yet they went to the greatest cities in the world, to Athens, to Corinth, and to Rome. They went to cities where civilization was well developed, where law and order were gloried in, and where Virgil, Celsus, and Origen guided the intellectual life of the people. But the missionaries of this later period went among the barbarians, among people who scarcely knew civilization, and who lived, not in organized cities, but in tribes. They worshipped nature in the trees, in fire, and in frost. Though there were leaders and great men among them, yet these men were not great in culture and intellect, as were those of Rome and Greece.

From Ireland, for instance, the workers went into the remote districts, into the mountainous regions of Scotland, and into the islands near it. They scattered everywhere, not to win any particular people, but to tell their story to the entire world. It was with this desire and thought in mind that St. Columba sought the Iona Island, where amid the grandeur of nature he could establish a center from which work could be carried into the depths of places still more remote. He did not seek to civilize the people with whom he labored; but rather to give them

a knowledge of a true God who could free them from the fear of death.[1]

Boniface too, when he left England the first time, went out in the same frame of mind. He felt the call to carry the gospel, the command to "go" so strongly, that he left everything, feeling that for him it was but to "follow" as did the early disciples of Christ. Thus he went into Frisia, not with the purpose of actually changing the general condition of the people, but of calling them to their relation to a God.

But there is some difference in the spirit which thrilled the missionaries who went out from the Roman Church. About 500 A. D. this Church was well organized. In and about Rome there were archbishops and bishops, parish priests, and lesser church officials, and the men who went out from Rome desired not only to Christianize the little groups of people, but went as did Augustine, to do in England what had previously been done in Rome, to make a branch Church in this British country.[2]

The very fact that they went with this in view, led them to go directly to the leaders of the people among whom they expected to work. While the apostles worked among the lower classes, going as it were from the outside to the center; and while the missionaries from Ireland worked only on the outside without attempting to organize;

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1. Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p.53.
2. Raine, Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops, Rolls Series: v. 71, Preface, p.22.

the Romans came at once to the kings and princes of these barbarian people.

By the time the Roman leaders went out, that spirit of asceticism, that desire to live in the remote, to stand in the quiet and worship God, was distinctly removed, and the fact that the missionaries went directly to leading persons is very significant when compared with the work that is done on the mission field today.

The following examples show how true it was that the missionaries worked rather from the center than toward the center:

Columbanus was refused when desiring entrance into the court of King Brude, but Adamnan tells us that notwithstanding this refusal, he "approached the folding door with his companions, and after first forming upon it the sign of the cross, knocked and laid his hand upon the gate, which instantly flew open of its own accord, the bolts having been driven back."[1] As can readily be seen the result of this miracle, for so it appeared to them, was the interest of the king to whom they had come, in the work in which they were engaged.[2]

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1. Skene, History of Celtic Scotland: v. 2, p. 105.
   Reference given to Adamnan, B. II. c. 36.

2. Skene's explanation of this: - "We may well suppose that the bolts may have been withdrawn and the anger of the king disarmed through no greater miracle than the impression created by the imposing presence of the three ecclesiastics with their attendants."
   History of Celtic Scotland: v. 1, p. 106.

When Augustine went to England he took many letters of introduction with him. He carried letters to the queen of the Franks, who was on good terms with the leading people in the Kentish provinces of Britain, and in this way not only secured entrance into the Frankish court, but was here given interpreters, men of the Franks who could converse with the Angles, to go with him and his companions into England. When they reached England Augustine remained on the Isle of Thanet, while his interpreters went to King Aethelbert, asking him for an interview. The king granted this, and promised to meet Augustine. Some days later he arrived, and "on a level spot, probably under a spreading oak in deference to the king's dread of Augustine's possible incantations," the friendship of the king of the Angles, and the monk from Rome, was formed. The king granted Augustine protection in the royal capital which later became the center of the organized Church of England.[1]

But of all the workers who entered and were welcomed with hospitality in the royal houses, Columbanus was undoubtedly the greatest. He was at all times in the closest and best relationship with contemporary kings, and was always anxious to base this friendship upon the fact that he went out as did the prophets of the Hebrew nation, to "speak thy testimonies before kings, and not be ashamed."[2]

St. Maurus who left his home in Cassino about 540, and crossed the Alps to begin work among the Franks, went

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1. Catholic Encyclopedia: v. 2, p. 82.
   Reference given to Bede H. E., l. XXV.
2. Montalembert, The Monks of the West: v.2, p. 285.

first to King Theodbert and from him secured much land upon which he could found his monastery as the center for his work.[1]

The work of Boniface is just a little different from that of other missionaries. Possibly the fact that he labored among a people who were near enough to Italy, to know something of the place Rome held, explains the fact that when he went into the court of Charles Martel with letters of introduction from the pope, he was not only welcomed but given decided opportunity for advancing his work. Boniface kept in such constant touch with the papacy, not only by his letters, but also by his return journeys to Rome, that the position he thus held with princes made him able to work, not only as an evangelist, but as a Romanizer as well.[2]

It is hardly possible to overestimate the impetus given by rulers to the work of the missionaries, especially when a king or a queen became Christian.[3] It

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1. Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p. 84.

2. Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p. 93.
   Hauck, Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands: v. 1, p. 458.

3. This is seen in the conversion of King Edwin in 627 A. D. Here the work resulted in a very open and mighty overthrow of the idols and in the burning of the temples.
   Bede, Ecclesiastical History: p. 95, 96.
   Again when "King Oswy delivered his own people from the hostile depredations of the pagans, and having cut off the wicked king's head, converted the Mercians and the adjacent provinces to the grace of the Christian faith."
   Bede, Ecclesiastical History: p. 152.

is true that the very fact that men became Christians in such numbers and under such strange conditions, proves that many of the seeming conversions were merely superficial. But when we consider the rapidity with which Christianity grew, and the fact that it was founded strongly enough to hold its own in later political controversies, we are compelled to admit the significance of its early advancement.

Turning now from the direct approach made by the missionaries to the leaders of the land in which they desired entrance, to the appeal which the new religion made to the wives and mothers of the land, we find that then as today, women held a very important place. Here we must note that the women with whom the missionaries of these years were dealing were not of the Eastern type, and though not held in the highest esteem, were approached readily. Our missionaries who go into Turkey and India complain that it is impossible to enter the homes, but here in these northern countries the women did the work performed by the men of today, they tilled the fields and did the other work of the home, while the men went out to fish and to fight.[1]

Thus very often the missionaries reached the tribes through the women. To princes and kings they went, and yet it was often by means of the wife of the king, that he himself was convinced of the truth of Christianity

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1. Life among these early Germans may be taken from Tacitus, "Germania," Pennsylvania Translations and Reprints: v. 7, no. 3.

and influenced to accept it. Augustine received entrance into Canterbury directly from King Aethelbert but converted the king through the influence of his Christian wife, Queen Bertha.[1]

Columbanus, wishing to build a church for his increasing number of disciples in Burgundy, secured a site from the king, Gontra, by appealing through the queen.[2]

The influence of the queen, Thyra Danabod, shows in a special manner what a woman of her type was able to do. Rumbert, who followed Ansgar in his work in Denmark, accomplished much because of the relationship he held with the queen, Thyra Danabod. The king of this place was a decided heathen, yet he had married a Christian woman, and through her influence he permitted Christian activities to be carried on. One time trouble did break out, and yet after a short interval, King Gorm, the husband of Thyra Danabod, again gave Christianity a place, and some years later there grew up such a close relationship between the son of Gorm and the follower of Ansgar, that it almost seemed that the heathen king was in actual cooperation with the Christian work.[3]

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1. Just how far the queen went in her appeal to the king to accept Christianity, it is impossible to state. However, in her letter to Gregory she tries to make up for the opportunities she had lost previous to Augustine's arrival,
   Catholic Encyclopedia: v. 2. p. 83.
   For Reference to letter: Gregory, Epp., XI. (indic., IV, 29)
2. Montalembert, The Monks of the West: v. 2, p. 251-3.
3. Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p. 116.

Before going further we must fully understand the character of the missionaries sent out. From imaginary pictures and pen-portraits of these missionary monks we get the impression that they were old, worn out, and narrowly religious. But this idea seems far from true. They were somewhat older than the ordinary missionary who goes out at the present day, and yet they were of an age when they were able to do the best work. Boniface was not over forty-one when he went to Frisia, Columbanus was forty-two when he went to the continent, and Columba left for Scotland at about this same age. Considering that these men had all been workers in religious interests at home,and had been almost always leaders of their own people, they seem to have been the very best possible type for the kind of work; men of the firmest character, able to make decisions and keep them.

To say that these men were worn out and aged in appearance seems also an unreasonable conclusion. It is true again that our pictures show this, but is it not likewise true that the pictures show them at a time when their work is ended? Thus they are colored with the spirit of devotion and fear, which was so characteristic of this age.

These men, however, were far more religious than they were men of education, men who appreciated what gave to Rome and Greece their greatness, and men who felt the need of these things in the heathen lands. They had spent much of their early life in education, and knew the value of it. Boniface was well versed in history, rhetoric,

and poetry,[1] while Columbanus knew Greek and Latin.[2] What place education held in their lives can be seen in the work that was later done in the monasteries. Here they taught music, grammar, and architecture, along with the various religious studies.[3]

But the depth of character of these workers must not be overshadowed. Their humility is so impressive as we see them submit to all things and bear the burdens of their trials in a spirit of deepest devotion. Jonas pictures the life of Columbanus when he says: "modesty and moderation, meekness and mildness, adorned them all

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1. Catholic Encyclopedia: v. 2, p. 656.

2. Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p. 87.

3. Theodore in 669 A. D. taught scriptures, ecclesiastical poetry, astronomy, and arithmetic.
   Bede, Ecclesiastical History: p. 172.
   "The greatest homes and nurseries of religion and civilization in the country were Lindisfarne, Hexham, Jarrow, etc. The artisans and students in the train of Wilfrid and Benedict spread far and wide that knowledge of architecture and music which they had brought with them from Italy and France.
   Raine, Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops: Roll Series: v. 71, Preface p. 29.
   Wilfrid in 678 A. D. was not satisfied to have merely ritual, but demanded that music, architecture, foreign art, foreign civilization, and learning be brought to his people.
   Raine, Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops: Roll Series: v. 71, Preface p. 27.

in equal measure. The evils of dissension were banished. Pride and haughtiness were expiated by severe punishment. Scorn and envy were driven out by faithful diligence."[1] In the life of Ermendfried, a monk from Luxeuil monastery, this same characteristic is manifest. He was so humble in all his ways that he was ever the servant of others. He always did the lowest acts and left the better things for his fellowmen, for "he loved the work and the workers- when he perceived the hard hands of the ploughmen, he bent down to kiss with tender respect the noble marks of the week's labor." Egilbertus in writing the life of this monk says: "I have surveyed the annals of all nations, ancient and modern, but I have found nothing which has moved me more, or better explained the true cause of the victory of Christianity over the ancient world, than the image of this German, the son of the victor of Rome and conqueror of Gaul, become a monk, and kissing before the altar of Christ, the hard hands of the Gaulish husbandmen, in that forgotten corner of Jura, without even suspecting that an obscure witness took note of it for forgetful posterity."[2]

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1. Jonas, Life of Columbanus:
   Pennsylvania Translations and Reprints, v. 2. no. 7.

2. Montalembert, The Monks of the West: v. 2, p. 316.
   For Reference - Egilbertus, Vita S. Ermenf.,
   ap. Bolland., t. VII., Septemb., p. 120.

These missionaries were also very superstitious. The religion of the Catholic Church had become a religion of fear, fear for the future rather than the present. The belief in future rewards overshadowed the work of the missionaries and tended to increase the mysticism of the Christian religion. Thus their acts were colored with much that was mysterious.

Part III. Work on the Field.

The work of the missionary when he was once on the field and about to convert the heathen, was as different from that of the first apostles as the work of a missionary today, who goes into the remote districts of India and China is different from that of one who goes among the high and educated classes of the same people. The necessity of civilizing never confronted the apostles as it did the Christian missionaries who carried the gospel to the barbarian people. The apostles had but to organize congregations of believers,while the fifth century worker had first to educate and then convert his people.

In order to carry on education, the missionary did as our workers do today, instructed the children, and thus established a basis upon which he could develope his work. It was the plan of Gregory when Augustine went to England, that he should purchase English captive boys of seventeen years of age and organize a school,[1] while Willebrord bought thirty boys, as a nucleus for his work.[2] After securing a number of these boys the missionary had next to build a home in which the children as well as his own helpers could live. Just how many of these helpers there were is a question, and yet every missionary had his companions in his work. Among the Irish workers it was cus-

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1. Catholic Encyclopedia: v. 2, p. 81. For Reference, Gregory Epp. VI-VII. in Migne F. L. 77.

2. Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p. 111.

tomary to go out in bands of twelve disciples and one leader, while the Roman Church had no definite number.[1]

Since the ideal life of the Christian leader up to this time had been the secluded ascetic life, it is not surprising that these workers should have sought hidden and quiet places for the homes which they built. The settlement organized by St. Martin of Tours contrasts strangely with the usual monastic centers. He gathered all his people together in little wattled cells or huts and surrounded these huts with a trench or wall of earth.[2] In Ireland the plan was also different from the monastic type. Here they actually built churches, most often in groups of seven, as representative of the Apocalyptic Church of Asia. These churches were built of earth and were homes, rather than places of worship.[3] The workers who went into the less

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1. Irish workers went out in bands of twelve disciples and one leader.
   St. Columba with twelve brethren to Hy in Scotland A. D. 563.
   St. Columbanus with twelve to France and Germany A. D. 612.
   St. Kilian with twelve to Franconia in A. D. 680.
   St. Willebrord with twelve to Friesland A. D. 692.
   See Reeves, St. Columba, Intro., p. 71.
   From Italy forty Benedictine monks set out with Augustine, to go to England.
   Catholic Encyclopedia: v. 2, p. 82.

2. Eckenstein, Women under Monasticism: p. 13.
   For Reference see Gildas, Epistles, c. 66.

3. Stokes, Tripartite Life of Patrick, Preface, p. 157. Roll Series, 89.

remote places in England and Europe, built regular monastic centers. They were in the form of villages with wooden huts, a church, a common eating hall, a mill, and a common garden, about which was built a wall either of earth or stone.[1] Such places served as centers for education and for all the evangelistic work that was carried on in the surrounding district.

Within these villages the secular activities of the monks can be seen. Here as no where else we have pictures of the common and ordinary life of the workers. The purely religious side of the monastic life has been greatly overestimated, for the monks were as human as we are, and had they not enjoyed other worldly opportunities, the monastic life could not possibly have spread so rapidly. Rules were numerous, and extremely rigid, and yet the very fact that these rules were needed seems to prove that life in the monastery had more than the religious side.

It was for the missionary to organize the work in these centers, for here lived people of different interests and of various temperaments. The monks needed food, clothing, and the ordinary necessities of life, and it was the leader's duty to give each man his part, and to see that it was accomplished. The missionary must also be careful lest the religious life be neglected for the

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1. To us in America, the missions described seem far off and unreal, and yet to those who have visited the San Gabriel mission in California and have seen the little church with its tower and bells, the cemetery on the one side, and the vineyard on the other, the adobe homes by the roadside, and the whole surrounded by a broken down wall; to those this picture of the monasteries is more of a reality.

secular, and lest education, which was the real object of the founding of the monastery, be lost sight of. To accomplish this, Columbanus divided the work of the monks under his care into two parts: the regular ascetic exercise, and the practical and useful agricultural labor.[1] At Iona the monks themselves were separated into three classes: those who attended to the religious service, instruction, and the transcribing of the scriptures; the working brethren devoted to agriculture, the tending of the cattle, and the domestic labor; and those who were distinctly under instruction.[2]

The evangelistic work of the monastery was carried on by three quite definite methods: preaching, catechizing, and letter writing.

We read in the Acts that the first missionaries who attempted to preach in Rome, in Greece, and in Asia, due to the gift of tongues, were not obstructed in their work by the lack of ability to speak various languages. But such equipment was not given the workers who followed them. They were forced to acquire languages by patient study. Thus at first the missionary was compelled to preach to his people through the mouth of an interpreter, and was forced to spend much of his time in language study. Very often it was the missionary who converted the spoken language of the heathen people into written language, and it was always for the missionary to translate the scriptures into the vernacular. Ulfilas in the fourth century translated the bible into the

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1. Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p. 86.
2. Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p. 70.

Gothic tongue, a decided advantage to the missionaries who were able to obtain this translation. The influence which Rome had among the barbarians and the place it held in the church in the fifth and sixth centuries, can be seen when we realize that in almost every service the Latin was used, regardless of whether it was understood or not. The barbarians who were brought into the monasteries and educated were compelled to study Latin, in order that the plan of the church service could continue unhindered. Some of the problems which a missionary was forced to contend with and his way of solving them can be seen in the letters of Boniface to Gregory, where he asks the pope whether he should allow a baptism to be carried on in bad Latin, rather than use the heathen tongue.[1]

Turning now to an investigation of just what it was that the missionaries preached, just the kind of subjects they considered, and the manner of the appeal made, it is quite necessary that we understand the character of the teaching of the church at this time. Some five hundred years had passed since the disciples started out with their story of love and peace. During this time a great change had occured. Some insignificant things in the teachings of the Master and his disciples, were not only made of supreme importance, but were enlarged upon by the

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1. The definite circumstance that caused the permission of the native language to be used in baptism, was the use of the following phrase by a newly converted priest: "in nomine patria et filia et Spiritus sancti zu taufen."
Hauck, Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands: v. 1, p.568.

Christian Fathers of the early Church. These people did not seem ready to grasp a God of love, whose interests were in the present. They dwelt rather in the future reaching out to a God of fear. The fear that the end of the world was at hand, which was ever in the mind of Gregory, colored every word in the preaching of these workers. Is it surprising that with this result, the superstitious insight into life should have increased? With the superstitious came the miraculous which entered most of their teachings. The disciples had taught by miracles,-were they any less able to do likewise? Thus everywhere in the teaching of these missionaries the miraculous is evident, every new or unusual event was but a miracle, and every unexplainable occurance came by the hand of God. They feared to look into the doings of God's own world, to understand Nature herself, lest by so doing they bring upon themselves the wrath of God.[1]

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1. The belief in demons can be seen from the following examples: St. Gall, being advised by St. Columbanus, entered a pagan temple and taught the people of the Creator, and of Christ. He then overthrew the idols near him. Some barbarians believed, but many were angered. Later St. Gall heard the conversations of the demons and wondered that prayer kept the people free from their annoyance. He then returned to St. Columban, and "before the brethren could raise their voices, the voice of an unseen being was heard, and wailing and lamentation echoed from the mountain top."

   Robinson's Readings: v. 1, p. 91.

   For Reference - Life of St. Gall (Anonymous).

   St. Columbanus at one time abandoned his work, because in a dream he was told by an angel that "The world is before thee; take the right hand or the left hand, but turn not aside from thy road, if thou woulds't eat the fruit of thy labours."

   Montalembert: v. 2, p. 275.

With this strange interpretation of the scriptures, the Roman Church gained new, severe, and decided doctrines, which grew to have as important a place in the lives of the Christian teachers, as the scriptures themselves.[1] The missionary believed himself not only compelled to preach the scriptures, but the church doctrine as well. It is very interesting to consider the steps taken by the missionaries against certain heathen beliefs, when we remember what superstitious ideas they carried in their own teachings; ideas so far from the thought of Christ who said "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."[2]

Another very direct method and one which is quite as distinctly educational as evangelistic, is the teaching of the catechism. To what extent the catechism was taught previous to conversion, it is impossible to say. We know that there were times when great armies were converted and baptised almost immediately, upon the command of a king or leader, thus giving evidence that what instruction they received must have been gained after the act of baptism. Bede,however, implies that catechizing held a very important place in the ordinary work of a missionary. He says that King Edwin, at the time of his conversion, was first instructed by Paulinus, and later baptised. He tells, too, how Paulinus spent much time in simply going from place to place in the work of catechizing and baptizing.[3]

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1. Bede's description of Purgatory, Hell and Heaven. Ecclesiastical History of England.
2. John 10:10
3. Bede, Ecclesiastical History: p. 96, ffg.

Letter writing served too as a very important means of evangelism. This was one of the oldest methods used in the Christian Church. The apostles engaged in work in Rome, Corinth, and Phillipi, by means of letter writing. Among the later missionaries the manner of letter writing was somewhat different. Boniface wrote letters to many of his fellow monks, and carried on an especially large correspondence with the women in the nunneries. But the greatest work of this kind that he did was in writing letters to his home people and to the pope in Rome. Both Augustine and Boniface turned to the pope for help in every time of trial, and not only they but also the people with whom they labored, received letters from him. Thus letter writing served as inspiration to the missionary as he labored in a distant field.[1]

Along with the evangelistic work, went the performing of rites which by this time had become of very great importance in the Church. In fact it was this sort of thing that was foremost in the life of the monks. Here we find that the missionaries kept to the Roman practices, diverting from them only when the conditions rendered them impossible.

Baptism by immersion was the only form considered until the twelfth century.[2] This was most often carried on in rivers because of the naturalness of the method. Here was one more of the questions which Boniface was forced to face, for many of his people had been baptized in the name

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1. Letters from Augustine to Pope in Bede's Ecclesiastical History. Also in Migne's Patrologiae Latinae.
2. Catholic Encyclopedia: v. 2, p. 262.

of the heathen god by the sprinkling of the blood of beasts, and Boniface had to decide whether it was not necessary to baptize in the name of the Trinity.[1] After baptism the rite of Confirmation was carried on.[2] The observance of Communion was not easily settled, for in a like service, the heathen used several cups in place of one, as did the Romans.[3] Confession was from the very beginning a part of the missionary's work. At first it was open, but early in the history of the Church the numbers that attended became so great that individual confession became important.[4]

And now having followed the missionary from his home into the foreign field, having located him on the field, and having seen something of his ordinary day's labor, his method of dealing with the heathen religious practices must be considered. If we could but realize

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1. Hauck, Kirchengeschichte Deutschland: v. 1, p. 388.
2. Says Lingard (Anglo-Saxon Church: v. 1, p. 296.) "The confirmation of the newly baptized, was made an important part of the bishop's duty. We repeatedly read of journeys undertaken by St. Cuthbert chiefly with this object.-Children were brought to him for confirmation from the secluded parts of the country; and he administered to those who had been recently born again the grace of the Holy Spirit."
   Bede "Vita Cuthbert," c. 29, 32.
   General Reference Catholic Encyclopedia, p.219.
3. Hauck, Kirchengeschichte Deutschland: v. 1, p. 476.
4. Bede tells of St. Cuthbert (664), that he was of such forceful character, that no man was able to conceal from him the most hidden secret of his heart, but all openly confessed what they had done; "because they thought this same guilt could not be concealed from him, they wiped off the guilt of what they had so confessed with worthy fruits of penance as he commanded."
   Bede, Ecclesiastical History: p. 227.

how many of our present customs, which we celebrate with almost a religious care, are but the results of the intermingling of heathen practices and Christian ideas, we could appreciate something of the trials which these missionary monks had to face. The Christian Church celebrates its Palm Sunday and has its sacramental service, but the heathen had also customs which corresponded or possibly were identical with these. More than this, our Easter egg, and our Christmas tree are purely the survivals of heathen customs. Then also, consider the number of superstitious ideas to which we still cling. Do we not still hang amulets around our necks, and is not Friday's bad luck proverbial?[1] Then can we wonder that it was impossible for the missionary to lay down rules which could cover all things? Each condition and each circumstance presented some new obstacle which needed to be solved in a new way. It was not possible for the missionary to cry out against all these heathen practices, for no doubt the success of Christianity during these years was in part due to the fact that he sacrificed some things to gain the confidence and friendship of his people.

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1. Sermon attributed to Saint Eloi-
Migne 87 col., 528-529.
89 col., 1041.
Do not consult diviners, sorcerers, enchanters, for any reason or malady- Do not observe auguries, or sneezing- When you go on a journey, do not think of the songs of little birds. Let no Christian observe any day for going out or coming in. Let no woman hang amber around her neck or invoke Minerva. Let no one have fear to do work during the new moon, for God made the moon.
Vacandard, "L'Idolatrie en Gaule"
In Revue des Questions Historiques
v. 65, p. 443.

The question of idol worship was the one thing firmly opposed by the greater number of the missionaries. Possibly it is due to the fact that those who went from Ireland and Scotland and England had been so far removed from the Roman idol worship, that their opposition to it was perhaps stronger than of those who went up from the south.[1] Gregory, who was a Roman and who had no doubt seen idol worship to such an extent that it had lost its blackness, sent word to the workers in Gaul that they must not take too violent measures against this pagan custom.

The attitude, however, which the missionaries took toward the little things, the minor customs which were imbedded in the lives of the heathen people, is especially significant. The pope on one occasion wrote Augustine that he should destroy the idols within the temples, but not the temples themselves, for he considered it the duty of the missionary to use these for the glorification of God, by converting them into Christian churches.[2] Another time Gregory advised Augustine

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1. Vacandard discusses idol worship to some length. In that Fustel de Coulanges holds the view that there was no idol worship in Gaul at the time of Boniface, Vacandard takes the occasion to support, by a more careful investigation, the opposite view. He claims that idol worship was not only held by the peasants, but by the leaders as well.
   Vacandard, L'Idolatrie en Gaule,
   In Revue des Questions Historiques: v. 65.

2. Bede, Ecclesiastical History: p.56.

to permit his people to sacrifice cattle according to their ancient custom, but no more "to the devil but to the praise of God," for it was impossible he thought "to efface everything at once from their obdurate minds, and he who endeavors to ascend to the highest place, must rise by degrees and steps, and not by leaps."[1]

Another example of the manner in which the Christian Church took up the heathen customs is seen when Boniface places bible verse cards about the necks of the children, where heathen chains had been worn before.[2]

The question of saint worship was a very vital one, and one which caused an unlimited amount of trouble. The papacy saw no reason for not allowing the missionaries to permit saint worship, as long as they substituted for heathen deities, the names of Christian saints. Thus many poetical traditions and legends of the Teutons became a part of the stories which surrounded the bible characters, and the St. Peter who was worshipped in the British Church became a far different St. Peter from that worshipped among the Germans, while to the Virgin Mary were attributed innumerable virtues. To her were dedicated many holy days, and she became a miracle working power in the sight of the people.[3]

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1. Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p.34.
2. Hauck, Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands: v.1, p. 476.
3. Montalembert, The Monks of the West; v. 1, p. 293.
In the 7th Century Pope Sergius ordered the festival of the Virgin Mary to be held on the heathen holy days in order that the heathen celebrations might gradually become associated with her. "According to Rhys, many churches dedicated to Mary were built on spots where traditions tell of the discovery of a wooden image, probably a heathen statue which was connected with her." "Often",

The custom of pseudo-saint worship is one of the strangest practices allowed by the Christian teachers. Though this actually went into effect somewhat later, it had its origin in the fact that the early workers had permitted a close relationship to be drawn between the heathen stories and those of the Christian Church, not realizing its future results, and undoubtedly considering it a means of strengthening their cause.[1]

That the missionary was sometimes not able to eradicate the heathen practices is seen when we consider how often Christianity was introduced almost exclusively by the kings. Sometimes the means exerted by the political leaders were so scheming and treacherous, that the missionary, not realizing the situation, permitted some things which he would not otherwise have tolerated. The king demanded conversion because of political interests, caring nothing of what heathen customs and practices remained in the religion of his people. They, not sufficiently acquainted with the new religion, naturally clung to their heathen ways. Then too, there were times when numbers outweighed in the

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says Menzel, "a wonder working picture of the Madonna is found hung on a tree, or inside a tree, and such expressions as 'Our dear lady of the Oak', mark the place." Possibly at the foot of such a tree or somewhere near, a fountain might flow, thus showing her miraculous power.
Eckenstein, Women under Monasticism; p. 10.ffg.

1. Miss Eckenstein says this was carried on mostly in regions where the Christian religion spread less rapidly and that "their reputation rests on their connection with some hallowed site of the heathen period and the persistence of popular faith in them."
Eckenstein, Women under Monasticism; p. 44.

mind of the missionary the results of conversion in the personal lives of the people.[1]

One more very common method which was employed was that of connecting the Christian story with some heathen myth. This method which is used so often in the work of the missionary today, was used in this early day quite as successfully. The Scandinavians, for instance, were worshippers of an "unknown God" of mythological nature, whose story so corresponded with the Christian God, that by its use the missionary's appeal was strengthened.[2]

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1. Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p. 121.
2. Edda Story in Scandinavian: "When a man died, he went to Walhall, if he had been brave, and to Wiflheim, if he had been a coward. In Walhall he lived together with the gods in great brightness and joy, fighting all the day, feasting all the night. In Wiflheim he sat alone, a shadow surrounded with everything that was disgusting and degrading. But Walhall and Wiflheim were not to last forever. A deep darkness, Ragnoroke, shall fall over the universe: Walhall and Wiflheim shall be destroyed by fire: the gods, the heroes, the shadows, shall perish. Then a new heaven and a new earth shall be created by the All-Father, and he shall judge men. The representative of this goodness, this dim foreshadowing of the Christian idea of holiness, was Baldur, the young god, standing on the rainbow and watching the worlds, and he was also the link which held together the whole chain of the Walhall gods; when he died, Radnoroke came."
   Schaff, History of the Christian Church: v. 4, p. 108.

Conclusion:

Thus we have followed the work of Christian missions from the time when the disciples on the Day of Pentecost received as it were a new insight into their own lives, and a new outlook upon the lives of other people, to the years when Christianity branched forth from the Frankish provinces, and made its way into the north. We have followed the missionary from his home into the foreign land. We have seen him as he demanded entrance into the districts of other people. We have met him in his ordinary round of life, as he went in and out among the people, calling them to the worship of the Christian God.

We have not been able to consider all the methods of the individual missionaries, but have merely suggested such general ones as may lead to future study.

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